

REMARKS

The Restriction Requirement is traversed. Applicants disagree with the Examiner's statement that the branch polymers of claims 1-9 are anticipated or obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,955,557. The distinctions between the claimed branch polymers and those of the prior art are documented on pages 1-4 of the specification. Accordingly, claims 1-9 and 11-15 are so linked as to form a single general invention concept as defined by PCT Rule 13.1.

Further, MPEP §803 states that an application may be properly restricted to one or more claimed inventions only if (1) the inventions are independent or distinct as claimed, and (2) there is a serious burden on the Examiner if restriction is not required. Thus, even if appropriate reasons exist for requiring restriction, such a requirement should not be made unless there is an undue burden on the Examiner to examine all of the claims in a single application.

Here, it would seem that search and examination of the elected and non-elected inventions would substantially overlap.

For at least all of the above reasons, withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement, and examination of the application are respectfully requested.

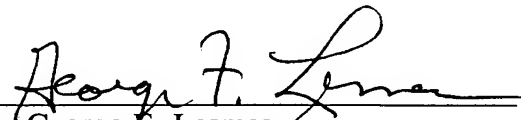
If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (703) 838-6683.

Respectfully submitted,

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